

If lack of day care keeps parents from improving their English skills, then bring the day care to the English classes.

That's the theory, at least, behind a new program intended to help Wauconda-area parents interested in learning English as a second language.

"It's a very cool thing, because while the parents take the classes, the kids will be watched at the park district," said Wauconda Area Library Director Tom Kern.

The project was jointly developed by the College of Lake County and several Wauconda-area agencies, including the United Partnership for a Better Community, Wauconda Area School District 118, the Wauconda Park District and the Wauconda Area Library, with funding from a federal grant.

The grant of \$248,000 was initiated by Rep. Mark Kirk — a Highland Park Republican from the 10th District — through the Families Involved In Reading Stories Together program.

"It truly is a collaborative effort," Kern said. "The (College of Lake County) is the one who's really making this possible."

He said the library got involved after a survey done by the partnership found parents eager to improve their language skills but unable to attend classes.

"They really want to learn to speak English," he said. "But they don't have the opportunity because they have young children."

The twice-per-week free classes give families with children aged 3 to 6 the opportunity to improve their English skills at the same time their kids are taught. Parents will take English as a

second language classes at Wauconda High School while their kids get a preschool-type education at the Wauconda Park District's beach house.

Then, parents and children meet once every four classes at the library, 801 N. Main St., to learn together. There will be story time and activities for kids, and literacy programs and computer classes for adults.

The 12-week session of classes begin Sept. 19, but advanced registration is required.

"They can't just show up to the class," Kern said.

Interested parents have to attend one of the two application sessions on Aug. 29 and 31. The application sessions will be from 6 to 8 p.m. at the high school, 555 N. Main St., in room B4.

For details about the classes, call the library at (847) 526-6225. And for more information about all FIRST programs, call (847) 543-2024